

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A retractable knife sharpener comprising:

an ergonomically shaped handle having an internal hollowed portion and an opening at one end thereof in communication with the hollowed portion thereby defining a housing;

a sled slidably received within the hollowed portion and having an outer end and an inner end and a sled guide; [[and]]

an aperture disposed on the housing in communication with the hollowed portion to provide accessibility the sled guide from outside of the housing; and

a sharpening structure carried by the sled at its outer end;

wherein the sled is selectively positionable, relative to the handle, between a retracted position enclosing the sharpening structure and an extended position exposing the sharpening structure, by applying a substantially longitudinal force to the sled guide.
2. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 1 wherein the sharpening structure includes a pull-through type sharpener.
3. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 2 wherein the sharpening structure includes an elongated slot and a plurality of sharpening members that are situated relative to each other to form a substantially V-shaped groove.
4. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 3 wherein the sharpening members include ceramic rods.

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5. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 1 wherein the sled includes a retaining mechanism disposed on the inner end for retainable engagement with the housing.
6. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 5 wherein the retaining mechanism retainably engages the housing in the extended position.
7. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 5 wherein the retaining mechanism retainably engages the housing in the retracted position.
8. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 5 wherein the retaining mechanism includes a resilient member extending from the sled and having a first detent structure disposed thereon.
9. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 8 wherein the housing includes a complementary second detent structure for retainable engagement with the first detent structure.
10. (canceled)
11. (canceled)
12. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 1 wherein the handle includes a grip enhancing material.
13. (currently amended) A knife sharpener comprising:

a handle having an internal hollowed portion and an opening at one end thereof in communication with the hollowed portion thereby defining a housing;

a sled slidably received within the hollowed portion and having inner and outer ends and a sled guide and being selectively positionable between retracted and extracted positions relative to the handle; [[and]]

an aperture disposed on the housing to provide accessibility to the sled guide from outside of the housing; and

a pull-through type sharpening structure disposed on the outer end and having an elongated slot terminating with a plurality of sharpening members situated relative to each other to form a substantially V-shaped groove.

14. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 13 wherein the handle is ergonomically shaped.

15. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 13 wherein the sharpening members are ceramic rods.

16. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 13 wherein the sled includes a retaining mechanism disposed on the inner end for retainable engagement with the housing.

17. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 16 wherein the retaining mechanism retainably engages the housing in the extended position.

18. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 16 wherein the retaining mechanism retainably engages the housing in the retracted position.

19. (currently amended) [[1.]]The sharpener as claimed in claim 16 wherein the retaining mechanism includes a resilient member extending from the sled and having a first detent structure disposed thereon.

20. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 19 wherein the housing includes a complementary second detent structure for retainable engagement with the first detent structure.

21. (canceled)

22. (canceled)

23. (original) The sharpener as claimed in claim 13 wherein the handle includes a grip enhancing material.

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